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CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215

Plan to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Pollution Presented to Governor

PHOENIX (Sept. 23, 2008) – Gov. Janet Napolitano today received the recommendations for the design of a regional market-based cap and trade program for the Western Climate Initiative (WCI). The WCI is a collaboration among seven Western U.S. States, including Arizona, and four Canadian provinces to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the western United States and Canada. The WCI recommendations were developed after an extensive stakeholder process.

“In the absence of federal leadership, it is up to the states and provinces to take action to address the serious problem of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas pollution,” Governor Napolitano said. “A lot of hard work has gone into these recommendations, and I look forward to reviewing them closely.”

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens, who serves as co-chair of the WCI, said the recommendations will provide a blueprint for future actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Arizona and throughout the West.

“Scientific studies show clearly that Arizona and the West will be one of the areas hardest hit by the effects of climate change, including prolonged droughts, increased temperatures and heat waves, worsening air pollution, more intense forest and rangeland fires and other impacts,” Director Owens said. “We have to start taking action now to reduce Arizona’s greenhouse gas emissions.”

The WCI was launched in February 2007 by the states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington. Since then, they have been joined by Utah and Montana and the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec and Ontario. Together, the seven states and four provinces represent approximately 73 percent of the Canadian economy and 20 percent of the U.S. economy. Formal observers of the WCI include the states of Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Nevada, and Wyoming, the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, and the Mexican States of Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Sonora, and Tamaulipas.

The WCI has set a regional goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the West to 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020.

Arizona has the fastest GHG emissions rate of growth in the U.S. Between 1990 and 2005 Arizona’s GHG emissions grew by nearly 56 percent, roughly two-and-a-half times the national average. If unchecked, Arizona’s GHG emissions are projected to grow by 140 percent over 1990 levels by the year 2020 and by 200 percent over 1990 levels by 2040.

The recommendations can be found on the WCI website at www.westernclimateinitiative.org.